How to Cull the Poultry Flocks

Breeding Males Should Be Strong, Vigorous, Well-Developed and Up to Standard Weight

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CULLING GUIDE FOR HENS

To Eliminate Unprofitable Layers

To Select the Best Birds for Breeding

HOW TO RECOGNIZE THEM

Keep		*Sell*
Lean	Head	Fat
Large Plump Bright	Comb	Small Shrunk Dull
Bright Bulging	Eye	Dull Flat
White	Eye ring Ear lobe Beak Shanks	Yellow
White Large Moist	Vent	Yellow Small Dry
Wide Thin	Span	Narrow Thick

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CULLING CHICKS

The first culling should be those chicks which have suffered an
:k of diarrhea. Severe diarrhea stunts the growth of chicks and
chicks should be toe punched and later sold for food.

Studies carried on by the writer in 1916 with Single Comb White
horns showed that in one flock eleven birds that were affected
diarrhea averaged only 0.28 pounds each at eight weeks of age,
e eight birds of the same flock not affected, averaged 0.47 pounds
n. In another flock of the same breed the birds that had suffered
attack of diarrhea averaged 0.56 pounds each and those of the
k not having an attack averaged 0.74 pounds each. It was also
erved that severe diarrhea of chicks resulted in a weakened con-
itional vigor and this weakness was reflected through the next
eration. If we are to have good fertility, hatchability and livabil-
of chicks it is essential to grow strong, healthy, vigorous, rapidly-
eloping birds. Birds must have good weight and vigor.

The next culling should be done when the young birds are eight
twelve weeks old, saving only those that are making a thrifty
wth, feathering out over the back, and are of proper body propor-
ns. Use or sell for food all birds showing any deformity, or those
h "crow heads"; that is, showing weakness by not making proper
wth of the head and neck as well as the body. Such a crow-
ded bird is shown in Figure 1.

There is a great difference in powers of nutrition among birds of
same flock, hatched at the same time, and kept under exactly the
ne conditions as has been shown by studies made by this Depart-
nt.

The final culling of young range stock comes in the fall at time when the pullets go into the adult pen for laying and breed purposes. Those birds not showing full development of body, he and neck should be used for food. A lack of this development sho constitutional weakness. This is illustrated in Figure 1, in which th

FIG. 1. A Single Comb Rhode Island Red cockerel of weak constitutional vigor. Thi bird lacks proper development of the head, neck, comb, wattles, and body. It lack depth and width, and has a wry tail and a slipped wing. The facial expression i weak.

will be noted the lack of body development which can be plainly se if a comparison is made with the picture shown in Figure 2. T bird does not stand up squarely on its legs, and the lack of weig and stamina is plainly seen in making the comparison. There is lack of good development of the head, neck, comb, and wattles. T

st bone should be straight, and as the pullets develop their adult
ners and come into laying, the comb, face and wattles become
ht red in color, with a gradual enlargement of the comb and
les.

The most vigorous and best breeding birds develop rapidly and
are early. In the male, good development of the head, neck, and

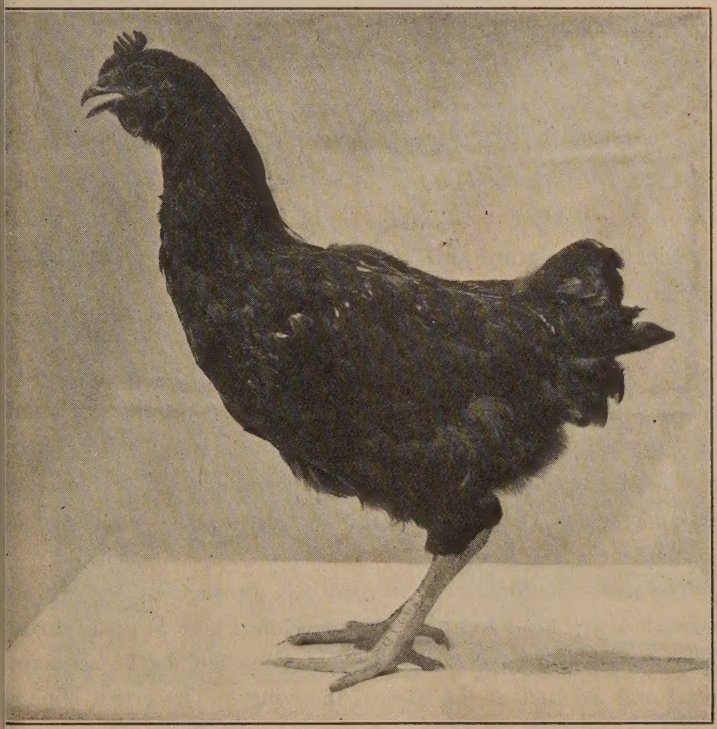

Fig. 2. A Single Comb Rhode Island Red cockerel with strong constitutional vigor. This bird has a well-developed head, neck, comb, wattles, and has good depth and width of body and stands squarely on his feet. Note his strong legs set well under the body and his general rugged appearance.

y will soon be shown. It is the early hatched males that are the
breeders and the birds should have good weight, as weight and
mina go together. *Don't eat the early "fryers" and save the late*
hed, poorly-developed birds as next year's breeders.

SELECTING BREEDING BIRDS

Among the birds that are considered the best for the farm both table and egg qualities, are the Single Comb Rhode Island the Barred Plymouth Rock, and the White Wyandotte; and for alone the Single Comb White Leghorn.

The larger breeds, as the Reds, Rocks, and Wyandottes ha in February or not later than March and given proper range, and attention, will develop into good maturity by early winter such cockerels may be used as breeders but the late hatched, imm bird should not be used for breeding till the following year. same principle applies as well to the females. The lighter breed the Leghorns, are hatched one to two months later because they ture more quickly.

Select only mature birds for breeders. Do not select birds u standard weight. In selecting breeders avoid crooked breasts, cro backs, and wry tails. The birds must be free from disease and show any indication of having been affected by disease. Great and a strong constitution are indicated by the bright red comb wattles and by the full, bright, prominent eyes and general alert and also by the lustrous plumage. Males should be decidedly ma line and females should show feminine characteristics and not ma line tendencies.

The male should possess a broad back throughout, legs set str and well apart, head and neck well-developed and decidedly mascu They should also have good depth of body and be broad across breast and the back at the base of the wings. The breast bone sh be straight and the lay bones not too close together. These points inherited and mean good capacity and, in pullets, mean high egg duction. The narrow chest, shallow body, the breast that dip toward the back bone, and the lay bones that lie close together s low egg-producing qualities.

In selecting breeders one should look to the individuality of bird, its ancestry; that is, it must be from a good strain for the pose for which it is being bred, whether for egg production,

purpose, or for meat. The character of the parent birds must be taken into consideration.

Hens should not be kept longer than three years and should be disposed of sooner if they do not measure up in egg production. Hens two years old and mature cocks produce stronger and more livable chicks than young immature birds. Eggs from hens are larger

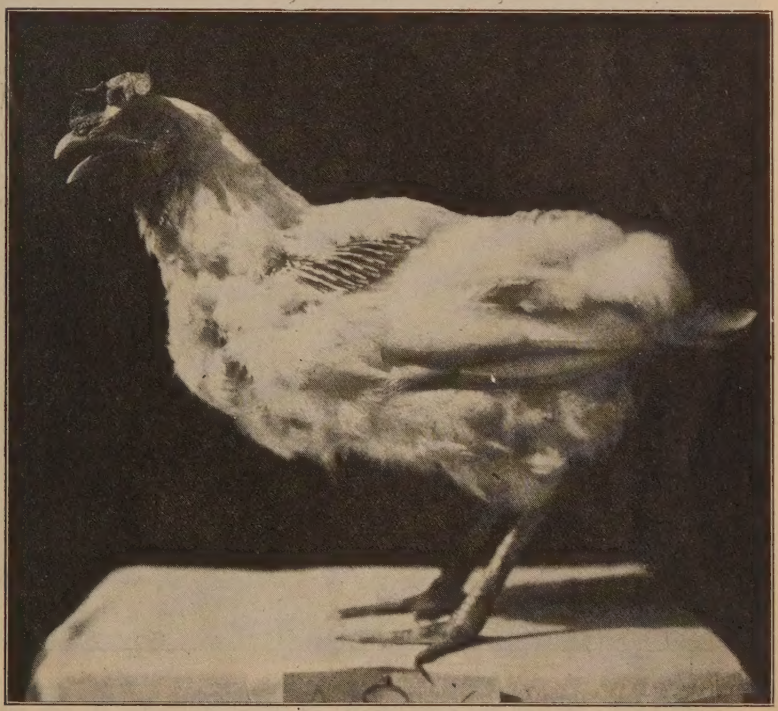

Fig. 3. A photograph of a Single Comb White Leghorn hen taken on August 16th. This hen went into a full molt on July 25th, and did not lay until the next spring. She laid 81 eggs. Early complete molters are low producers.

than eggs from pullets and the chicks are correspondingly larger which may have an influence on the ultimate size of the bird.

CULLING THE HENS

The old flock, which means the hens, should be culled in July or August as your judgment, of good and poor-laying birds, will be best

in this season of the year. The bird that has been fed in the proper manner and who goes into a molt in June, July, or August will not lay sufficient number of eggs during the following year to pay a profit. If she has not been properly handled and fed she may go into a molt prematurely and is one of the conditions to keep in mind in culling fowls.

FIG. 4. A photograph of a Single Comb White Leghorn taken on August 16th. This hen is from the same flock as the one shown in Figure 3. She has not molted and is still laying. She went into a complete molt in October after laying 152 eggs and did not lay till the following spring but began to lay before the one shown in Figure 3. Late molters are high producers.

Figure 3 is a photograph of a Single Comb White Leghorn hen that was taken on August 16th and the trap nest records of the N. C. Experiment Station show that she quit laying and went into a molt on July 25th. This is a complete molt as shown by the fact that the feathers are being cast in whole feather tracts as observed on the wing bow. The records further show that she did not commence to lay again until the following spring. This hen laid 81 eggs.

Figure 4 shows a photograph of a hen taken on the same day as the picture of the hen in Figure 3. This hen is still laying and it will be noted that she has all her old feathers. She did not go into a full molt and stop laying till October. She then went into a full molt, grew her new coat of feathers and rested till the following spring. She laid 152 eggs in the year. Late molters are heavy layers. Early molters are poor layers.

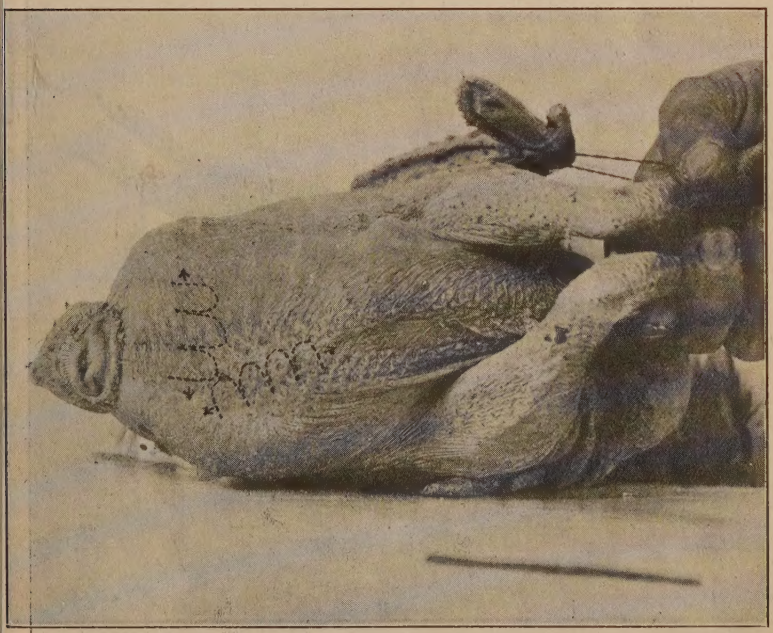

Fig. 5. Side views of a carcass of a good layer showing by dotted lines three fingers' breadth between the lay bones and four fingers between the rear of the breast bone and the lay bones. Note the smooth, fine skin.

During July and August the heavy layers will still be laying and will have a lean face; large, plump, bright comb; bulging eye; white eye ring, ear lobe, beak, and shanks. The vent of the laying hen will be white, large and flabby. The capacity, or distance from the rear end of the breast bone to the lay bones, should be three or more fingers in width.

Figure 5 illustrates how to determine the pubic span, which is the distance between the lay bones or pubic bones. Figure 6 shows how to determine the distance from the posterior end of the breast bone and the pelvic bones. This is the capacity and indicates the ability of the bird to take in large quantities of feed and digest it. Large capacity means many eggs and poor capacity indicates that the bird does not possess the power to lay large number of eggs. Capacity,

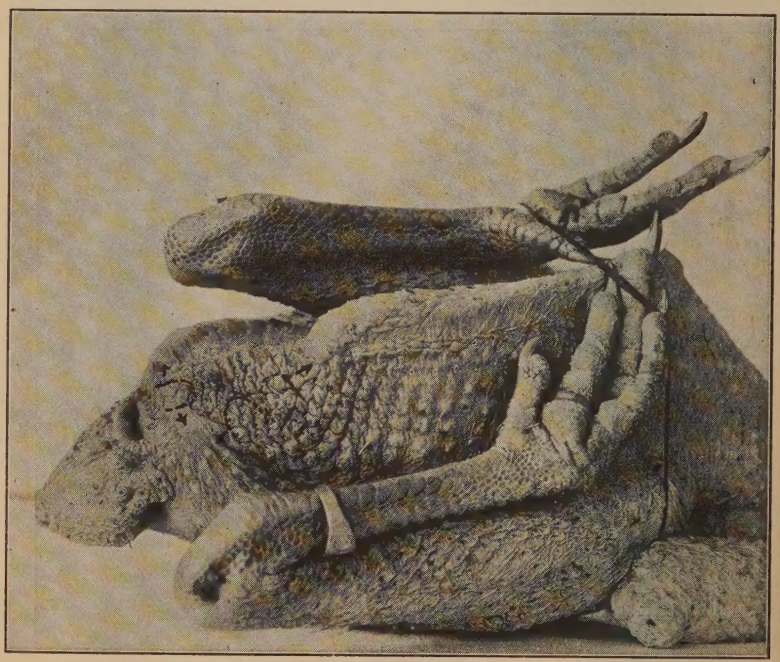

FIG. 6. Side view of a carcass of a poor layer. Dotted lines show only two fingers between the rear end of breast bone and lay bones and one finger between the lay bones. Note the rough, coarse skin.

therefore, is of great importance for without proper capacity, heavy production is impossible.

The poor layer has a fat face; small, shrunken, dull comb; dull, flat eye; yellow eye ring, ear lobe, beak, and shanks; yellow, small, dry vent; narrow in capacity and pubic span. The skin of a heavy producing hen is thin, soft, and pliable, especially the skin of the

bdomen. The skin of a poor producer is generally thick, hard, and ather coarse. We should, therefore, eliminate from the flock those ens with hard, leathery skin and hard abdomens with small spaces etween the lay bones and with short space between the posterior end f the breast bone and lay bones. The shanks of a heavy layer are lat, pliable, and smooth-scaled. In hens at the end of their laying ear, or pullets that have laid heavily for a long time, the shanks will e bleached out and will show no yellow.

Any farmer, after a little practice, will soon be able to notice the vonderful difference in capacity of hens as measured by his own ingers.